Strategy/Support Group meetings:

First Brainstorm Dinner 1/23/96

Key: ( ) = speaker, idea source
[ ] = Ty's thoughts while typing up

Ideas Prior to Meetings:

• **Huey Johnson**: on the inside cover show what is required to produce the magazine and what is not covered by subscriptions.

Yes, raise the price. The people who want it don't care about the price.

• **Gary Snyder:** "There is a greater quantity of good information in this magazine than in any other."

Ask the writers you want if they are working on anything right now that you could use. Good writers, famous names, need to be asked, because other magazines are asking them for material. They have no time to send you things if you haven't asked.

Ideas:

• Direct mail is expensive, but it is possible to use a kind of guerrilla, low-cost direct mail tests, for about $20,000, to test feasibility. (ML)

• Do the most honest thing you can do. Use as a guide the rule that you will not put anything in the way of friendship. (LS)

• My kids are always trying to keep from being manipulated. Young people are really against arrogance. (LS)

• Kids like the stuff we do. It is hopeful and it is something they can do. (JB)

• Is there a thematic book in the old stuff, from different ..... ?

• Getting on radio shows could help let people know about it: Mark Dowie, Michael Tom, Scoop Nisker. (BK, et al)

• Themes: e.g., what's at stake in this election? Theme issues to define the magazine. (MK)

• "Here's why you need to read this magazine this year." What's coming up. (ML)

• Eric Utne's intended appeal is to people overwhelmed with information. The Utne Reader promises to pick out just the choice pieces, save you time. (TC) [The Whole Earth seems to offer the opposite, great amounts of additional important information in your life.]

• But, in fact, we mainly winnow out good information and tools for the reader. (TC)

• The winnowing is downplayed too much. (MK)

• Clarity of what we are saying. (WR)

• The reason our own people failed us is that they were not honest enough about what they are doing. No bullshit detectors. Need to critique ourselves. The young people are struggling most about how not to be manipulated. Move to more vulnerability, more settling down into introspection and truth-telling. Ask people about their failures. (LS)

• Which subscribers would go for $30. Which for $50. Piecemeal this thing together.

• More literacy-- good literary work being put out now, new. (LS)

• WER has been informationally poor, need more metaphor. (LS)

• Check with Sandy Close (sp?) of Pacific New Service. Kids who are looking for truth.

• Try pulling the magazine back to something you can afford (MM) Special issues, like wind and sun.

• Think about advertizing. (ML)

• Try to accept corporations as sponsors as KQED does. We choose them (MK) Explain editorially how you chose them, make it interesting.

• Go out and get publicity in Newspaper and TV. (BL)

• Update--positioning, different subtitle, editorial, "you need to know this" (MK)
-to be pointed in the right direction, so not waste time with...

• What do people most like to read? (LS)

• Call people (our writers and thinkers) and ask them what they are reading, who they are travelling to see. (LS)

• A good theme would be: "An apolitical guide to the election." (MK)

• Look for people we know, old Whole Earth people, who might now be affiliated with corporations who could be sponsors.

• Bruce Katz, for the Board.

• SVN and BSR (Social Venture Network and Business for Social Responsibility.) Be in connection with them.

• Be at the SVN meeting in April.

• Call Kim Cranston. May know people. (BL)

• Apply for a McArthur grant for training kids, in terms of training in ideas.

• For MARKETING MANAGER: Put a classified ad in WER for a manager, put in the next issue.

• For BOARD: People like to be on boards. Publisher:
Clay Feldman (sp?) Invite potential board members to a meeting. (BL)

==========

2nd Brainstorm Dinner, 1/29

Key: ( ) = speaker
[ ] = Ty's thoughts while typing up

Ideas:

• Think of other ways to get the message out besides print media. (AB)

• Yes, "Guide to Self-Reliant Economies," lifestyle. Take a risk! Put time on this. (AL)

• Go to Electronic media.

• Ecological design, globalization, "takings."

• Is there a way to stop selling the magazine and start selling the perspective? Have the subscribers buy participation in a movement. Not selling the WER, selling a vector. Like the *Nation* which is not just a magazine, it's a club. (MK)

• Do we want to institutionalize like that?

• On the net--interactive. (WR)

• The original readers were the kind who never would join clubs--but they do now. (MK)

• Check out how Noetics did it. They have 30,000 members, at $35 apiece (?) Tom Hurley did the turnaround. [Ty will contact Tom Hurley, whom he knows pretty well.]

• Try a moving scale: charge $3 for the first issue, $6 for the second, $9 for the third, $12 for the fourth.

• Ask for $500,000 from the Marin Community Fund (Buck). They have a good board now. They have so much money they are grateful for a worthy project they can fund within their guidelines. (SC) [Perhaps the

combination of long term Marin estabilishment and employer, carrier of the Marin spirit,/ and the vision of local and county self-reliance could put us in just the right place with them.]

• Have we sent questionaires to our readers? (MK)

• I would not do any reader survey. (GL)

• "Religion and Environment" -- too abstract. I'm hearing too much of abstract categories. We need instead "ficciones" (?), stories. (GL)

• What ought to be done is to sentence someone to "entertainment." People now are drugged on entertainment. Say it as a story. Stories that touch on environment, economies, etc. The personal is larger than the abstract. People will say, "say did you see that in the WER?" (GL)

• Instate "Whole Earth Living Treasures" like the Japanese national Living Treasures.

• Raise the level of excitement of the ideas. (AL)

• Can we do it by just improving the ....

• Hold a press conference when your issue comes out -- like Lester Brown does at Worldwatch Institute. They serve cheap but good food--and journalists come, they like to come. (GL)

• Give away copies to the airlines to put them in the upper racks.

• Need a little more exciting and specific vision to get volunteers.

• (Just saw where) 70% of the working population will lose their jobs. (SC)

• Some are doing it from choice. Giving up corporate jobs they hate.

• New Press raises money. (SC)

• Hundreds of people use WER as a podium. There may be a way Whole

Earth could link with them: a consulting business, speaker's bureau, agent, etc. (MK or GL?)

- Contributing editors gather
  - -seminar -- WE writers. (RK)
  - -readers would get to talk to them, author gatherings are very popular (SC)

- Get six people who can speak to different aspects of self-reliance.

- Sydney Goldstein (?) City Arts and Lectures.

- College community.

- Get a comptroller type on board. A retired comptroller or financial officer. (AB)

- Having donors on the board is only good if they give BIG money. (SC)

- Co-publish, e.g., *New York Time Magazine* (MS)

- Republish theme issues as pamphlets or books. (MK)

- The most attractive thing to a foundation is that their money can bring your organization to self-sufficiency. (NC)

- Go for big money, $500,000 at least.
  - --Multi-year plan, e.g. 3 year. How to implement each stage.
  - --Get someone with experience in putting together a multi-year plan.
  - --Give the Board work like this to keep them bought in.

- Write up, priority.

[There are tapes of this second meeting, if anyone wants to get further into what the thinking was around these points.]